

Message Text

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INFO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT IMMEDIATE
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C O N F I D E N T I A L JERUSALEM 1746

EXDIS

DELIVER TO AMBASSADOR LEWIS UPON RECEIPT

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PBOR, PORG, MARR, UNSC, IS, LE
SUBJ: SOUTHERN LEBANON

REF: STATE 163370

1. HERE IS SIILASVUO'S ESTIMATE OF SITUATION AS OF MID-DAY
JUNE 27 (KEYED TO QUESTIONS PARA THREE REFTEL).

2. DEGREE OF HADDAD'S AND SHIDIAK'S PRESENT AUTHORITY OVER
CHRISTIAN MILITIAS. PRIOR TO IDF WITHDRAWAL, THIS WAS
CONSIDERABLE. WHEN HADDAD AND SHIDIAK DECIDED TO RESPOND
TO BEIRUT'S ORDER TO REMAIN INACTIVE AND FACILITATE UNIFIL'S
DEPLOYMENT, MILITIAS APPEARED TO HAVE TAKEN THINGS INTO THEIR
OWN HANDS. WHILE THERE IS AN ELEMENT OF UNCERTAINTY CONCERN-
ING HADDAD'S AND SHIDIAK'S RESIDUAL INFLUENCE, ALL UN OFFICIALS
HERE AGREE THAT HADDAD, SHIDIAK AND MILITIAS ARE DEPENDENT
ON ISRAEL FOR SUPPLIES WHICH ARE DELIVERED DAILY THROUGH THE
"GOOD FENCE." MILITIAS ARE DESCRIBED AS GROUPS OF VIGILANTES.
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HOWEVER, THEY ARE VIGILANTES MOUNTED IN TANKS AND APCs AND ARE
HEAVILY ARMED.

3. NUMBERS OF PALESTINIANS IN SOUTH. ARAFAT'S OVERLAY (JERUSALEM
1735) CONTAINED SITES PLUS INFLATED NUMBER (ABOUT 1,300) OF
MEN. AFTER CAREFUL CHECKING OF SITES AND MAKING A NEW HEAD-
COUNT, UNIFIL BELIEVES THERE ARE 190 ARMED PALESTINIANS IN

THE AREA. (THIS CORRECTS IMPRESSION REPORTED JERUSALEM 1735)
JONAH WILL CONVEY THIS TO ARAFAT IN BEIRUT AND SIILASVUO DOESN'T
KNOW WHAT HIS REACTION WILL BE.

4. WHAT ARE PALESTINIANS UP TO? SIILASVUO SAYS FOR THE PRESENT
THE PALESTINIANS ARE BEHAVING. THE ARMED GROUPS ARE UNDER
CLOSE UN SURVEILLANCE AND IN SOME AREAS THERE HAS BEEN ACTUAL
DIMINUTION OF NUMBERS. PALESTINIANS HAVE NOT FIRED ON UN OR
CHRISTIANS. SIILASVUO REGARDS THEIR PRESENCE AS POLITICALLY
SIGNIFICANT FROM ARAFAT'S POINT OF VIEW.

5. DEGREE OF UNIFIL SUCCESS IN PREVENTING UNAUTHORIZED INSIL-
TRATION. SIILASVUO BELIEVES UNIFIL HAS A GOOD RECORD IN PRE-
VENTING THE ENTRY OF ARMED PALESTINIANS. PROBLEM HAS BEEN ENTRY
OF UNARMED PALESTINIANS. JONAH HAS NOW INSTRUCTED UNIFIL TO
PREVENT ENTRY OF KNOWN UNARMED PALESTINIANS. AS TO HOW MANY OF
THE LATTER ARE IN THE SOUTH, SIILASVUO THINKS THEIR NUMBERS
ARE NOT LARGE, OTHERWISE THEY WOULD HAVE BEEN REPORTED TO UN
BY LEBANESE VILLAGERS.

6. UNIFIL'S SITUATION ON THE GROUND AND PROSPECTS FOR FURTHER
DEPLOYMENT. BASICALLY, MILITIAS HAVE PREVENTED UNIFIL DEPLOY-
MENT IN THE ENCLAVES. SIILASVUO DOES NOT CONSIDER SITES IN
JERUSALEM 1724 TO BE SIGNIFICANT, HOWEVER, NEGOTIATIONS ON THE
GROUND WILL CONTINUE WITH A VIEW TO GRADUAL FURTHER DEPLOYMENT.
THERE HAVE BEEN INSTANCES WHERE UNIFIL HAS PREVENTED INFILTRATION
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BY ARMED GROUPS AND THIS HAS HAD A POSITIVE IMPACT ON CHRISTIAN
POPULATION.

7. COMMENT: ANSWERING QUESTIONS ON SOUTHERN LEBANON IS A LITTLE
BIT LIKE THE FABLE OF THE BLIND MEN AND THE ELEPHANT. THE MOST
DIFFICULT ELEMENT TO ASSESS IS THE NUMBER OF UNARMED PALESTINIANS
IN THE AREA. AN AMERICAN UN OFFICER RECENTLY TOLD US THAT HE
RECOGNIZED SOME UNARMED PALESTINIANS IN THE AREA WHO HAD COME
FROM TYRE. PROBABLY NO ONE, ARAFAT AND ERSKINE INCLUDED,
HAS A CLEAR IDEA. THE MAJOR HOPEFUL NEW ELEMENTS ARE JONAH'S
ORDER TO EXCLUDE KNOWN UNARMED PALESTINIANS AND MEASURES
TAKEN TO EXERCISE GREATER CONTROL OVER THE SUPPLY OF NON-
MILITARY ITEMS TO ARMED PALESTINIANS.
NEWLIN

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